

INFORMATION ABOUT SEMINOLE COUNTY

History

The St. Johns River, which opens Central Florida to northern contact by an inland water route more than 200 miles long, dominates the history of Seminole County.

During six years of conflict with the Seminole Indians, the river provided water transport of U.S. military troops to the first white settlement, established in 1836, on the southern shores of Lake Monroe. From Fort Mellon southward, a succession of forts was built, becoming the forerunners to present day cities.

As homesteads increased, settlers received supplies by river transport and, in turn, shipped their agricultural products to northern markets by riverboat. From the 1850's onward, steamer traffic flourished along the St. Johns River, carrying tourists as well as freight, and giving way more recently to recreational boating.

The vision of General Henry Sanford, who in 1870 introduced plans for a town near Fort Mellon, now called Sanford, stimulated area citrus growing and other agricultural pursuits. By the time of the Big Freeze in 1895, the region had become the world's largest shipper of oranges. After the devastating freeze, farmers experimented with other vegetable crops. For many years, the area was known as the celery center of the world. Fern raising became important and from 1912 to 1940, Altamonte Springs, one of the County's seven cities, boasted the world's largest fernery.

In the 1880's, rail lines began connecting the more flourishing villages. Early fort sites and settlements grew into cities along the route of the South Florida Railway, encouraging settlement and bringing wealthy northerners south for winter sojourns of boating, fishing and enjoyment of the areas popular artesian springs.

People who wanted "a Florida Boston town" provided support to the development of Altamonte Springs. Longwood, the County's oldest city, also encouraged the tourist trade with a fine resort hotel. Through the years Seminole County cities and villages engaged in sawmill activity, citrus growing, turpentine and starch manufacturing, cattle raising, and the packing and shipping of citrus and farm produce.

Location and Topography

Seminole County was split from neighboring Orange County by the Florida Legislature on April 25, 1913, and became the 50th county in the State. The County consists of seven incorporated areas and five unincorporated villages within its 344 square miles (includes water bodies). Seminole County's location between Volusia County and Orange County has made it one of the fastest growing in Florida. The scenic Wekiva River, flowing north to the St. Johns River, defines the western boundary of the County. The northern portion of the County forms the Greater Orlando Metropolitan District with its boundary on Lake Monroe. The historic St. Johns River flows north along the County's eastern boundary, through Lake

Harney, past Lake Jesup and through Lake Monroe. Surrounding counties are Volusia, Orange, Lake and Brevard. The County seat is the City of Sanford, which is located in the northern part of the County on the shores of Lake Monroe.

Seminole County is located in Central Florida within easy proximity to downtown Orlando and attractions such as Disney World, Universal Studios, Epcot, MGM Studios, Sea World, Daytona Beach and the Kennedy Space Center. It is home to the Central Florida Zoological Park (located in Sanford), a greyhound racing park, a jai-alai fronton and the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team training center at Lake Sylvan.

Many of Seminole County's natural assets are water-related. In addition to three major lakes, the St. Johns River, Big Econlockhatchee River, and the spring fed Wekiva and Little Wekiva Rivers, Seminole residents enjoy the visual and recreational pleasure of nearly 200 smaller lakes scattered throughout the County.

Housing

Although Seminole County is one of the fastest growing areas in the State of Florida, the County has been able to retain its residential community characteristics. Traditional estate homes on oversized lots, contemporary subdivision and patio homes; multi-family condominium and apartment complexes provide much of the housing in Seminole County. Most of the developments are strategically located close to shopping, churches, schools and parks. Numerous lakes and waterways offer a wide variety of

additional recreational and aesthetic amenities.

Education

The Seminole County School System has a total of 55 schools to provide educational services to 60,056 students. The school system has 34 elementary schools, 11 junior high or middle schools, 7 high schools, 2 exceptional student schools and 1 alternative educational center.

Higher education opportunities are available within the County at Seminole Community College (SCC), a fully accredited, state supported, two-year co-educational college. In addition to an Associate of Arts Degree, SCC also offers occupational and adult education programs and various vocational programs. The University of Central Florida (UCF), located in Orange County, is approximately five miles from the Seminole County line. UCF offers 76 baccalaureate degree programs, 57 masters programs, 3 specialist programs, and 19 doctoral programs. In addition, Stetson University in DeLand and Rollins College in Winter Park provide private college education.

Media Services

One daily newspaper, The Orlando Sentinel, serves Seminole County. Seven weekly newspapers are also available to residents in the County. The area is served by 11 AM and 15 FM radio stations as well as 7 area television stations including public broadcasting. Cable television is offered in many of the more developed areas of the County.

Transportation

Interstate 4 provides the main North/South interstate length through Seminole County. It connects to Interstate 95 in adjoining Volusia County and is a direct route to the downtown Orlando area, Orange County and Florida's turnpike to the south. Highway 417 (the Central Florida Greenway) is the planned beltway around Orlando. The eastern and southern part of this road have been completed connecting the City of Sanford, the Orlando International Airport and Disney World exits. Highways 17 and 92 running from north to south through the County also provide important transportation links to other areas of Florida. State Highway 46 provides major east to west link between the City of Sanford and the east coast of Florida and connects to Highway 441.

Numerous other State and County roads provide excellent highway access to all areas of the County and other adjoining areas of Florida. In addition to paved roads, the County maintains approximately 43 miles of unpaved roads and provides emergency maintenance to restore accessibility to approximately 143 additional miles of unpaved roads. This road system provides evidence of the urban and rural lifestyle mix.

Air service to all parts of the United States and several worldwide destinations is provided through nearby Orlando International Airport and Daytona Beach International Airport which are both easily accessible from any area within Seminole County. Domestic and international scheduled and charter passenger service and

worldwide air freight services are provided by Orlando/Sanford Airport in Sanford. Orlando Executive Airport in Orlando and DeLand Municipal Airport in Volusia County provide general aviation services.

The County also has bus, rail and trucking transportation services. Bus service is provided within the regional metro area by the Central Florida Regional Transportation Authority which regularly connects Sanford and all other developed areas of south Seminole County with the City of Orlando. Greyhound Bus Lines also provides regularly scheduled service between Sanford and other destinations in Florida and the United States. CSX Transportation, Inc. provides rail service for freight delivery. Amtrak maintains a passenger depot and the terminus of Auto Train within the City of Sanford.

Shopping

Within the County are numerous shopping malls serving all urbanized areas. One of the largest shopping malls in Florida, Altamonte Mall, is located within Seminole County. Adjacent to the Altamonte Mall is the Renaissance Center containing a major department store, specialty shops and restaurants. A second mall, Seminole Towne Center, located in the City of Sanford, opened in September 1995. The Seminole Towne Center mall includes 5 major department stores, 130 specialty shops, a food court, and an 8-screen movie theater. A similarly sized shopping mall, the Oviedo Crossings Mall, adjacent to the Greenway, opened in March of 1998, providing shopping amenities in the eastern sector of the County. These shopping

areas draw people from all areas of Central Florida for diverse shopping opportunities.

Medical Facilities

Medical facilities are provided by Florida Hospital/Altamonte which is part of the 7th Day Adventist Sunbelt Health System affiliated with Florida Hospital located in Orlando, the South Seminole Hospital located in Longwood, and the Central Florida Regional Hospital, located in Sanford. As a result of the easy commuting between the County and the Cities of Orlando and Daytona Beach, numerous additional hospital facilities offering high degrees of specialization are also available within the metro area. Additionally, the Seminole County Health Department offers a multitude of medical services to the citizens of Seminole County.

Public Services

The County provides a wide range of services including law enforcement, judicial services, fire protection, conservation and resource management, five County branch libraries, health and welfare facilities, historical museums, employment opportunity and development, parks and recreation facilities, economic development and tourism promotion, planning and zoning, transportation, and general administrative services.

Form of Government

The 1868 Florida Constitution established the structure of county government. One hundred years later the 1968 Revision of the Florida Constitution made virtually no change to that structure. The Constitution provided for a Board of County Commissioners whose primary responsibility was to provide roads and levy the necessary taxes to fund county government.

Although most county governments in Florida today have the same structure described in the 1868 Constitution, the mission of county government has changed dramatically in the ensuing century. Where once the primary responsibility of county government was to provide roads and fund law enforcement, it now must deal with issues such as comprehensive planning, environmental protection, impact fees, water and sewer utilities, bond issues, solid waste management, computerization and management of information systems.

The Florida Constitution provides for "home rule" county charter government when approved by the voters by referendum. Under the home rule charter, the organization and authority of county government is decided by the local citizens rather than being dependent on the Florida Legislature. The voters decide by local referendum what county government organization will be most responsive to their needs. Charter government enables the county to adopt laws without the need for prior authorization by the Legislature in Tallahassee. Seminole County voters approved a charter form of county

government effective November 8, 1988.

The charter provides for enhanced citizen participation and control of the governmental process through petition and referendum amendments to the "home rule" constitution, the repeal or initiation of new ordinances, and recall of County officials. A County Manager appointed by the Board of County Commissioners as the Chief Executive Officer of the County is responsible for the administration of County Commission policies. An administrative code detailing all of the County's regulations, policies and procedures in a single document is also a requirement of the charter.

The County is served by a Board of Commissioners, with five members, each representing one of the County's five districts. Elected by the County at large, each serves a four-year term and the terms are staggered. Other elected County offices are: Clerk of the Circuit Court, Supervisor of Elections, Property Appraiser, Tax Collector, Sheriff and five County Court Judges and nine Circuit Court Judges.

Administrative departments and divisions under the direction of the County Manager provide many services of the Board of County Commissioners.

By law, the Board must establish boundaries of the five districts within the County at least every ten years - after the official U. S. Census has been completed. However, the Board at its discretion may redraw the boundaries following state and federal requirements at any time it determines inequities exist. The intent is to make the districts

as nearly equal in population as possible.

Annually, the Board elects one of their members as Chairman. The Chairman presides over all meetings, signs all legal documents, and appoints Commissioners to various committees. The Chairman is the official representative of the Board and retains a vote on all items and issues.

The Board of County Commissioners is the executive branch of county government and individual Commissioners serve as both legislative officers and fiscal representatives of the County. Acting in good faith and within their statutory authority, the Commissioners have wide discretion.

The Board meets at the Seminole County Service Building in Sanford on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month, at 9:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m. and at 7 p.m., to take official action. In addition, the Board meets whenever necessary in work sessions to discuss matters of general importance. No official action is taken at work sessions. Minutes are recorded of all Commission meetings, work sessions and public hearings and made a part of the record in the County Commission Records Office.

Economic Trends

Increasing Average Age: The share of county population of prime working age (25-44) was 7th highest in the State by 2000. Current median age is 36.2 and is expected to creep upward over the next decade. Population aged 45-64 will be the fastest growing County age group; the 25-44 group and 0-14 group will grow at the slowest rate. The rapid

growth projected for Seminole County's population aged 45+ is expected to require increased job opportunities for the elderly and a larger supply of multifamily housing.

Decreasing Average Household Size:

The average size of Seminole County households decreased by 18% between 1970 and 1990. Between 1990 and 1998, the average household size increased slightly, however, the future trend is expected to continue downward through 2020. The decrease in household size can be attributed to increasing average age, decreasing family size and increasing numbers of one-and two-person households. As average household size decreases, the number of dwelling units needed to accommodate a projected level of population increases, as does the need for more multifamily dwelling units. To meet continuing residential demands in the coming years, the County will need to re-evaluate the long-term amount of residential acreage now assigned to the Future Land Use map.

Increasing Median Household

Income: In the 1990 Census, Seminole County registered the highest median household income in the State. Median household incomes of \$41,428 in 1995 and \$48,413 in 1998 continued to rank number one in the State. Seminole County's strong income level is largely due to its attractive residential developments and quality of life; increases in average wages in the services and finance/insurance/real estate sectors; and availability of land in close proximity to major residential areas and metropolitan roadways. As income levels rise, demand for larger, more expensive housing will increase.

These high income levels are also expected to continue to attract retail and service businesses to the area. Prime locations, designated High Intensity Planned Development along I-4, will continue to attract major employers.

Increasing Number of Jobs Relative to Population:

Seminole County is changing from a suburban to an urban county, as evidenced by its developing economy and its increased importance as a regional job center. Since 1980, growth in the number of jobs located in Seminole County has outpaced population growth. From 1980 to 2000, this growth is reflected by a 5.0% annual increase in local jobs compared to a 3.6% increase in population. The County currently has an adequate amount of adopted future land use acreage to accommodate future job growth.

Residential and Commercial Components of the Tax Base:

In the recent five year historical period, taxable value of Seminole County's total ad valorem tax base increased by 45%. By comparison, the combined impact of population and inflation was 25% for the same period. While commercial ad valorem categories have been increasing, residential property still accounts for approximately 74% of the County's total real property tax base

Population: With a relatively small geographic area (298 square miles of land area, including small lakes, and 46 square miles in water area) and large population, the County is becoming increasingly urban in character. According to 1999 estimates, Seminole County's population ranks as follows when compared with Florida's 66 other

counties: third most densely populated, 35th in population increase from 1990 to 1999, which is indicative of an expected slowdown of population growth, and 12th most highly populated county. Population increases are projected at slightly less than 2% per year through the year 2010,

<u>Population</u>						
<u>City</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
Altamonte Springs	34,879	38,200	39,153	39,998	40,308	41,200
Casselberry	18,911	24,393	24,552	24,631	24,727	22,629
Lake Mary	5,929	7,470	8,289	9,167	10,222	11,458
Longwood	13,316	13,598	13,674	13,705	14,052	13,745
Oviedo	11,114	20,497	21,857	22,517	22,517	26,316
Sanford	32,387	35,279	35,529	35,667	37,327	38,291
Winter Springs	22,151	26,474	27,466	28,402	29,220	31,366
Unincorporated	<u>148,842</u>	<u>164,370</u>	<u>168,338</u>	<u>171,839</u>	<u>175,775</u>	<u>180,191</u>
Total County	287,529	329,031	337,498	345,166	354,148	365,196

Sources: 2000 FSAbst
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